

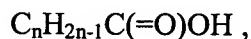
**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-20. **(Cancelled)**

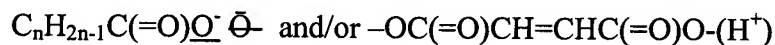
21. **(Currently Amended)** A method for preparing metal salts of unsaturated, short-chain carboxylic acids by reacting in a solution

- a metal-alcoholate compound and
- a compound selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acids of the general formula:



wherein the double bond is in the 2- or 3-position and

n represents 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6, maleic acid and mixtures thereof, in the presence of oxygen ( $\text{O}_2$ ), which is continuously fed so that the reaction solution is at least 50 % oxygen-saturated, to produce metal salts having at least one group of the formula



and a metal (M) selected from the group consisting of

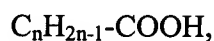
Al, Si, Sn, La, Zr, Cu and Zn and mixtures thereof.

22. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 21, characterized in that oxygen is continuously fed so that the reaction solution is at least 90 % oxygen-saturated.

23. **(Currently Amended)** The method of claim 21, characterized in that the metal salts have the general formula



and can be obtained by reaction of a linear or branched, unsaturated carboxylic acid of the formula



wherein n represents 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 with the double bond in 2- or 3-position, ~~preferably in 2 position~~, with a metal compound of the general formula



and, optionally,



wherein

a is at least 1,

b is 0, 1, 2 or 3 and

(a+b) and c are independently of one another an integer of 2 to 4,

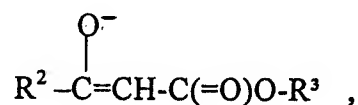
R<sup>1</sup> represents an alcoholate group having a C<sub>1</sub> - to C<sub>6</sub> hydrocarbon residue,

wherein R<sup>1</sup> is an ~~a saturated, linear or branched~~ alcoholate group, which can

be obtained from an alcohol having at least one -OH group, ~~wherein the -OH~~

~~groups are preferably primary or secondary -OH groups,~~

or



wherein  $R^2$  and respectively  $R^3$  represent  $-CH_3$ ,  $-C_2H_5$ ,  $-C_3H_7$  or  $-C_4H_9$  and  $n$ ,  $R^1$ ,  $R^2$ , and  $R^3$  may be different for each  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  and at least one  $R^1$  in  $M(R^1)_c$  represents an alcoholate group having a  $C_1$  - to  $C_6$  hydrocarbon residue.

24. **(Currently Amended)** A method according to ~~any one of~~ claim 21, characterized in that the reaction is carried out in the presence of continuously fed oxygen in a gas mixture containing the oxygen in a concentration from 5 to 30, preferably 15 to 25 vol%.
25. **(Currently Amended)** A method according to ~~any one of~~ claim 21, characterized in that the reaction is carried out at temperatures from 0 to 150 °C, preferably 20 to 100 °C.
26. **(Currently Amended)** A method according to ~~any one of~~ claim 21, characterized in that the reaction is carried out at pressures from  $\text{bar}_{\text{abs}}$  to 0.01  $\text{bar}_{\text{abs}}$ .
27. **(Currently Amended)** A method according to ~~any one of~~ claim 21, characterized in that the reaction is carried out without a solvent.

28. **(Currently Amended)** A method according to ~~any one of~~ claim 21, characterized in that the reaction is carried out in at least one of the following solvents: hydrocarbons, esters, ethers, glycols, and glycol mono- or diethers.
29. **(Currently Amended)** A method according to ~~any one of~~ claim 21, characterized in that the carboxylic acid is acrylic acid or methacrylic acid.
30. **(Currently Amended)** A method according to ~~any one of~~ claim 21, characterized in that the metal M is ~~Al, Si, Sn, La, Zr, or Cu, particularly~~ aluminium and/or zirconium, ~~preferably aluminium~~.
31. **(Cancelled)** A method according to any one of claim 21, characterized in that the metal compound is a metal alcoholate.
32. **(Currently Amended)** A method according to ~~any one of~~ claim 21, characterized in that the reaction is carried out in the substantial absence of water (~~less than 100 ppm~~).
- 33-40. **(Cancelled)**